

This newsletter is written by Debra Feldman, the head of JobWhiz, a career management and transition firm for executives. Sharing her article with our members does not mean that the TENG, Bruner Consulting or I am endorsing her services. Her contribution discusses how to run a more focused search campaign, building relationships and paying attention to the details. If you wish to send her feedback or contact her, you will find her Web address and phone number at the end of this article I am grateful for her contribution. Ed Pospesil

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HIDDEN JOB MARKET SECRETS

Job Search is a P Word

Effective job searching can be summed up in three key words all beginning with the letter P: Pinpoint, People and Persistence. If you master each of these and use them appropriately, you'll get faster, better results. The secret to finding a new job, especially an unadvertised position in the hidden job market, is to focus/pinpoint the campaign, connect with the right individuals/people and to relentlessly persist following up on leads.

Let's take a look at how to use these techniques to identify a new career as smoothly and quickly as possible with less stress.

PINPOINT: increasing the sheer volume of job search activities without also being discriminating about who you want to work for and knowing what value you bring to an organization from day one, won't accelerate your job searching progress contrary to what most job hunters think and do. Just one or two interviews showing a modicum of employer interest are not enough to cancel the rest of your campaign. Sending out hundreds or even thousands of resumes is certainly no greater guarantee that you are any closer to accepting an offer. Rather, the most positive impact on your job search progress can be generated by selecting a limited number of target companies and pressing to identify a personal contact that will be your internal advocate, recommending you, referring you and lending credibility to interest in them. Connections with company insiders position you strategically on track, privy to inside tips and ready to act instantly as the employer's circumstances dictate the need to hire you. Being known, respected, and liked secures a competitive edge over other candidates for an opening or unadvertised job.

Focusing on a select, manageable number of target employers allows you to shine above the competition when the time comes for the employer to make a hiring decision. You are not an anonymous resume, unsolicited application or briefly interviewed stranger but an individual who has already established relationships and trust where it counts among decision makers. Never take an interaction for granted. Prepare for every encounter with a prospective employer in order to impress them with your knowledge, questions and interest in them both as individuals and as a company. To summarize, it is not just how

many contacts you have and maintain within your field, but also the quality of each one because you want to make a favorable and memorable impression that will produce leads to new career opportunities matching your goals and the company's.

PEOPLE: Qualifications and credentials get you inside the door and past the gatekeepers. Personality and good interpersonal chemistry usually sways the decision towards one candidate over others, especially in today's environment where so many equally credentialed candidates are available. What can you do to gain an advantage? For starters, be authentic and generously give your time and talents to demonstrate your abilities and willingness to help the team effort. This voluntary contribution reinforces your sincerity and interest and moves the process along to a successful conclusion.

Companies don't make hiring decisions, their people do. You have to create opportunities promoting yourself and put your talents on the line. Why wait around forever when you want to work there now? Find out if the employer is serious about hiring or just shopping the job market for qualified applicants. How can you promote a hiring decision on your schedule? Suggest ways that you can help the decision makers be more comfortable with your candidacy. Perhaps offer to come to a meeting or prepare a presentation (usually without compensation other than direct expenses) to show unequivocally that you can do the job and provide the solution they want. Employers are worried about the risk of hiring you so find ways to increase their comfort with choosing you. Show that you can jump right in without a learning curve to make a positive contribution to the organization, that hiring you will not cost anything because you will save costs or make money for the employer equivalent or greater than your own compensation.

PERSISTENT: if any one of the three P's was the most important, it would have to be this one!! How many times have you sent out a resume and not heard back? How many times have you submitted your application and not followed up to see if it was received, evaluated and categorized? If you don't pursue opportunities past the gate (which is really a sieve keeping candidates out) you are hurting your chances for an offer. By focusing your job search on employers and contacts that you pre-qualify, those who have already shown some interest in you and then making sure that you stay active on decision makers' radar screens, your chances for an offer coming sooner rather than later improve dramatically. Companies are dynamic. They change constantly. If you are present when there is a need, you can be part of the solution. Don't expect them to come looking for you! Go to the companies you want to work for and demonstrate that hiring you should be a no-brainer!!

A bonus of the focused approach is the small world theory: buzz about a candidate will surface both internally within a target company and at other companies in the industry. This could mean meeting with not just one contact at a target company, but people in different areas of the company who may have occasion to collaborate and share resources and recommendations. When two people simultaneously mention you as a possibility, then your value to the employer (ka-ching) and credibility (which lowers employer's risk) soars.

Using all three P's in your job search will produce better results in less time. Each adds to your success potential. Combined, they are a powerful formula for success in today's job market.

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Debra Feldman

Tel. (203) 637-3500

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Ed Pospesil

Chairman

Technology Executives Network GroupSM

Vice President

Bruner Consulting Associates, Inc.

33 Elizabeth Street, 3rd Floor

Derby, CT 06418

epospesil@brunerconsulting.com

www.brunerconsulting.com

www.theteng.org

Phone: 203-732-7084 / 866-566-2224

Fax: 203-732-9033

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